

Venezuela July 31, 2017 Sanctions Designations

Topline:

Today, the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) designated the President of Venezuela, Nicolas Maduro Moros, pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 13692, which authorizes sanctions against current or former officials of the Government of Venezuela and others undermining democracy in Venezuela. These sanctions come a day after the Maduro government held elections for a National Constituent Assembly (Asamblea Nacional Constituyente, or ANC) that will have the power to rewrite the Venezuelan constitution, dissolve Venezuelan state institutions, and impose an authoritarian regime on the people of Venezuela.

The Maduro administration has proceeded with the ANC even though Venezuelans and democratic governments worldwide have overwhelmingly opposed it as a fundamental assault on the freedoms of the Venezuelan people. The creation of the ANC follows years of Maduro's efforts to undermine Venezuela's democracy and the rule of law. Maduro is not just a bad leader; he has now made himself a dictator. The United States stands with the people of Venezuela in the face of this oppression. The President promised strong and swift actions if the regime went forward with its National Constituent Assembly, and he will keep that promise.

As a result of today's actions, all assets of Nicolas Maduro subject to U.S. jurisdiction are frozen, and U.S. persons are prohibited from dealing with him. The U.S. government and democratic governments worldwide continue to call on the Venezuelan government to halt the ANC process and allow Venezuela's democratic processes and institutions to function as intended. We urge those who were elected to the Constituent Assembly to decline to take office.

Venezuela Policy:

- We continue to encourage governments in the hemisphere and around the world to call on President Maduro to abandon the Constituent Assembly process, which endangers democracy in Venezuela, and to take strong action to hold accountable all persons, regardless of rank or position, who threaten Venezuela's democratic institutions.
- The United States continues to call for the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners in Venezuela, for free and fair national elections to take place, for the people of Venezuela to be able to protest peacefully without fear of arrest or assault by government forces, and for the Venezuelan constitution to be respected.
- The United States is also very concerned about the situation of Joshua Holt, a young American being detained illegally by the Maduro regime for over a year now. We once again call for his immediate release on humanitarian grounds. The United States will not stand by as democracy is eroded in Venezuela.